

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

The following is a complete list of claims. The claims below replace all prior versions of the claims in the application. Please amend claim 18.

1. – 7. Canceled

8. (Previously Presented) A large-waterplane-area ship, comprising:

a hull structure having a plurality of exclusive hull portions protruding from a main body of the hull structure, each hull portion having a Froude number greater than approximately 0.8 during a cruising mode of operation of the ship, each hull portion being at least partially above a waterline during the cruising mode of operation, wherein each hull portion has a length different from the length of any other hull portion.

9. (Previously Presented) A ship, comprising:

a main body having a length;

a plurality of struts protruding from the main body; and

a plurality of pontoons each coupled to at least one of the plurality of struts, each pontoon being misaligned with the other pontoons along the length, each pontoon having a length shorter than the length of the main body and each pontoon having a buoyancy wherein the combined buoyancy of each pontoon is sufficient to support the main body above a waterline, and wherein each pontoon has a Froude number greater than approximately 0.8 during a cruising mode of operation of the ship.

10. (Previously Presented) The ship of claim 9 wherein the combined buoyancy of each pontoon is sufficient to support the struts above the water line.

11. (Original) The ship of claim 9 wherein each strut is attached to one and only one pontoon.

12. (Original) The ship of claim 11 wherein the length of each pontoon is longer than the length of its attached strut.
13. (Original) The ship of claim 9 wherein each strut is attached to a plurality of pontoons.
14. (Original) The ship of claim 9 wherein the combined buoyancy of the pontoons is adjustable to a level such that the ship operates at one of a plurality of operating modes.
15. (Original) The ship of claim 14 wherein the level corresponds to a catamaran operating mode.
16. (Original) The ship of claim 14 wherein the level corresponds to a small-waterplane-area twin hull (Swath) operating mode.
17. (Canceled)
18. (Currently Amended) A method of forming a hull for a ship, comprising:
 - forming a main body having a length; and
 - directly coupling a plurality of independent buoyant hull portions to the main body, each hull portion having a length that is less than the length of the main body, wherein each hull portion has a different length, and wherein, when the hull travels at a cruising velocity, the combined buoyancy of the hull portions suspends the main body of the hull above the waterline, and each hull portion has a Froude number greater than approximately 0.8.

19 – 23. Canceled

24. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a ship, comprising:
 - forming a main body having a length;
 - coupling a plurality of independent hull portions to the main body, each hull portion having a length that is less than the length of the main body; and
 - powering the boat to a cruising velocity, wherein at the cruising velocity each of the independent hull portions has a Froude number greater than

approximately .8, and each of the hull portions is at least partially above a waterline, wherein each hull portion has a different length.

25 – 26. Canceled